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PRACTICE WORK FOR PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Indiana University, by means of critic work in the Bloomington High School, attempts to give the Seniors in English some actual teaching experience. The candidates for this work must have not less than thirty hours' credit in their major subject, five hours in elementary education, six in secondary education, and two hours in a special course dealing with the materials and methods of the high-school work they are about to begin. After observing the critic teacher for approximately two weeks, each student-teacher is assigned a class which he teaches continuously for sixteen weeks, under the supervision of the critic teacher. The young teacher assumes all the responsibilities of instruction, discipline, entering grades, assembly and library periods, and any other duties of a regular high-school teacher.

The essentials of the plan of the English course used in this training are sketched very briefly in the following paragraphs.

The plan is based primarily on the bit of philosophy that children must be readers if they are ever to appreciate good literature and write with a smoothness and clearness born of a joy for writing. All types of literature are included in this list of supplementary readings: the child classic—the kind of literature that the student should be well read in before coming to the high school; modern literature—the books that most families are buying and reading and the better phases of magazine reading; and the literary type, composed of approved classics. An effort is made to encourage balanced reading, in order that graduates may know the classics and possess a sane judgment of what modern writings to read and how to read them. This supplementary work is relieved from all school requirements as nearly as possible, so as to give the student freedom in the choice of books and reduce examinations to a minimum.

Two ideas are emphasized in the intensive study of literature—an acquaintance with all forms of literature, and a free and easy speech in class discussions. Nearly all voluntary reading is of the story form. This may be due to an emphasis of the story in school work, or possibly, as many assert, to a revolt against the classics as taught in our secondary schools. Whatever the cause, it is evident that if students go from our schools without an acquaintance with the masters, they will never cultivate a taste for the best literature. This knowledge of the classics, however, is not so valuable that it should be purchased at too great a cost. Merely knowing *Paradise Lost* is not sufficient. The students

should appreciate it in some vital relation to their own lives. The best way to cultivate this free and frank relationship is to encourage liberal thinking, free speech, and a warm sympathy for the opinions of everyone. When the recitation loses most of its formalism and takes on the air and geniality of a happy family seated about the fireside, talking and commenting freely and sympathetically, then literature ceases to be a dead topic, the interest of the students is aroused, and a permanent appreciative effect is secured.

In the composition work, special stress is placed on *choice of subject*, *gathering material*, and *arranging this material in the most effective form*. The choice of subject is most often the product of the suggestions of the class, but in many cases the teacher presents the subject, or the student is permitted to make his own choice. However the choice may be made, a constant and careful effort is put forth to follow the tastes and tendencies of the students. Exercises are given in collecting material from literature, newspapers, magazines, and daily happenings in the community. Each student contributes his share to this collection of material on a given subject, and in turn draws on the complete collection for the points he wishes to incorporate in his theme. In this manner all themes have a common interest, yet no two need be so nearly alike as to create any monotony for the teacher. Known material and a common interest enliven and give point to the students' criticisms of their own and their classmates' themes.

Rhetoric is used more as a reference than as a textbook. At no time is the rhetoric to be considered a Bible; it is rather an amplification of the points developed in original composition work. The essentials of grammar are reviewed the first term and technical grammar is taught in the last half of the Senior year. The history of literature is studied in the last year for the purpose of classifying and placing historically the selections studied during the preceding semesters.